



PHOTOGRAPHY/ STEVE GRIFFIN

The Wasatch Suburbanettes perform for balloonists and their guests at the Homestead.

## Balloonists don 1880s garb for extravaganza in Midway

## Fair kicks off Park City's Autumn Aloft races this weekend

**By Heidi West**  
Deseret News correspondent

MIDWAY, Wasatch County — Balloonists, their crews and sponsors participating in the Autumn Aloft this weekend donned late 19th Century clothing and strolled the lawn at an 1880s extravaganza hosted by the Homestead Resort Friday afternoon. (See photograph on page A1.)

Homestead owner Jerry Sanders said he had been thinking about a costume party when he decided to be the patron sponsor of the 1988 Autumn Aloft in Park City.

"It's hard to keep the theme of a costume event from being too narrow," he said. "And that is why

we chose the 1880s. English gentlemen, pioneers and Indians are all appropriate." All were well represented at the party Friday.

The Homestead grounds were awash with entertainment for the balloonists and their guests. Entertainer Hamilton Teichert showed off some fancy cowboy roping, of a wheelbarrow, no less. The mime, Pepperoni the Clown, alias Doug Rider, twisted balloons into animal shapes for children and adults. And fortune teller Reba Rice read the future from Tarot cards.

Puppeteers, young cloggers and a female barbershop quartet called the Wasatch Suburbanettes shared center stage with belly dancers and clowns.

The entertainment was a backdrop to a quiet babble of professional talk among the 250 attending. One balloonist, Sid Cutter, Albuquerque, N.M., a hot-air balloonist for the past 17 years, said he and his brother bought their first balloon for their mother's birthday.

Their craft, World Balloon, is one of several hot-air crafts that travel a national and international circuit of competition. Cutter said he is normally in the top 10 of the national finalists, but dropped to number 11 this year.

"Points are earned by going from point A to point B and making a mark on the ground as close

Please see PARTY on B2

## PARTY

Continued from B1

to the target as possible," Cutter explained.

He said hitting the target dead on is 90 percent luck and 10 percent skill because of the winds and the fact you cannot steer a balloon. "The

same 10 balloonists always seem to win."

Those who rack up enough points in national competition are invited to an international event every two years. The next one is in 1989 in Japan.

Park City's Autumn Aloft, although not one of the national competitions, will still offer a series of games for the 26 balloonist who are

entered in this weekend's test.

"It's a classy race and a lot of fun just to be around other balloonists and the crowd," Cutter said.

Spectators who want to see the colorful balloons aloft should arrive at the departure site early in the morning. The balloons inflate between 6:30 and 7:30 a.m. Saturday and Sunday on the Park Meadows Golf Course and the contests are usually over by the time the wind picks up speed, about 9 a.m.

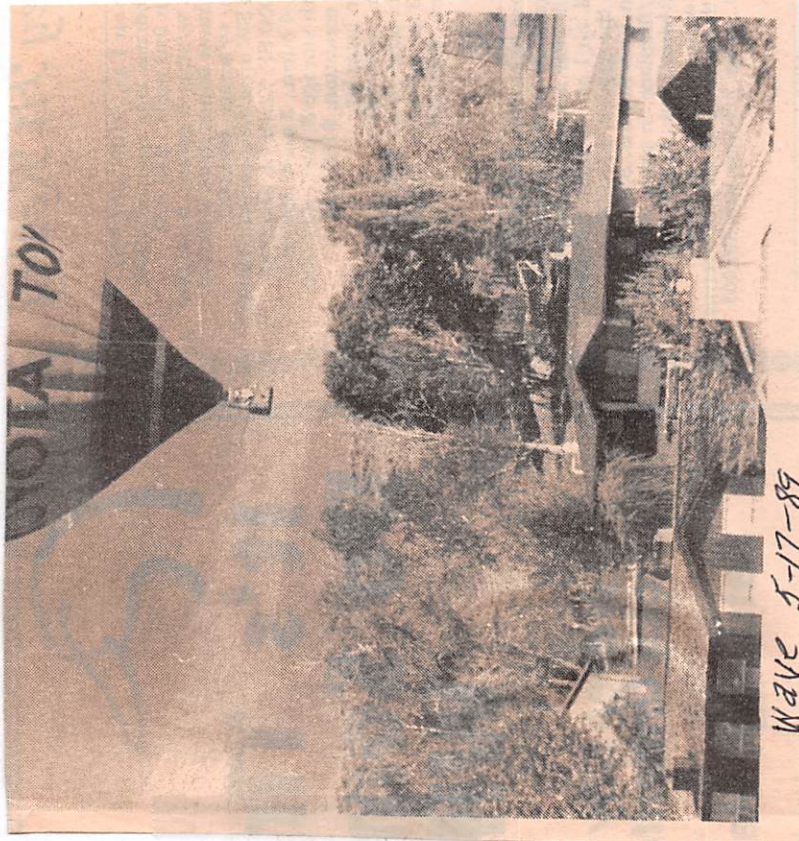


tors tied for second place.  
 "Light and variable winds gave all the pilots problems and John's patience and persistence paid off," said Collins.

Last Saturday will be remembered as a "historic day" by the 13 balloonists who flew over Heber Valley, according to the president of the Utah Aeronauts Hot Air Balloon Club, Stewart Collins.

The Aeronauts hosted the event, the first ever sanctioned in Utah by the Balloon Federation of America (BFA), which governs ballooning in the United States. It was the first of a series of races to determine the Utah State Champion and all but about three of the Utah club's members competed. The State winner will be a BFA-sanctioned champion and qualify to compete in the BFA national championships in Baton Rouge, Louisiana later this year.

John Ware, Salt Lake City, who had never competed before, took first place in Heber City, putting him in the lead for the State Championship. The other competi-



WARE 5-17-89

Heber enough — the landowners that provided sites for launch and landing were exceptionally wonderful. All the people we passed over and talked to during the flights...everybody was just super...

"It's a day that will live in the history of aviation in Utah...The pilots did a superb job. There were no incidents that I heard of at all. They didn't even come close to doing anything but make people smile. All the balloons were recovered easily with the help of the townspeople. It was just one of those good ones," he said.

He said the balloonists will return to the valley, probably sometime after November.

Nick Saum was the Balloon Meister for the event, in charge of putting it all together. He is a past balloon meister for the national championships, as is Collins. Collins was the safety officer, who determines whether or not to fly. Linda McCall was the scoring official. All are BFA-sanctioned officials. Charlie Brown, a Heber Valley resident, was the local coordinator and Shiria Collins was the secretary-treasurer for the event.